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The Princess and the Toad

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Abstract

ONCE long ago in a land far away, there was a magic forest. Few people ever ventured into the forest, and even fewer returned to tell about the wonders it contained. There was much speculation as to whether those who never returned had met with foul play at the hands of demons or had found a paradise so much better than their homes that they did not want to leave.

emptiness. His eyes were wet. He'd made it big. Life was a pile. Somewhere in the bowels of the city, Bruce Kaplan, America's fastest rising comedian put his face in the crook of his arm and broke into uncontrollable sobs.



The Princess and the Toad

by Bob Johns

Journalism, Jr.

ONCE long ago in a land far away, there was a magic forest. Few people ever ventured into the forest, and even fewer returned to tell about the wonders it contained. There was much speculation as to whether those who never returned had met with foul play at the hands of demons or had found a paradise so much better than their homes that they did not want to leave.

In that same land there was a beautiful princess. She should have been happy, for her father the king ruled kindly and was loved and admired by all his subjects. But her heart was heavy with despair, for though she had many suitors, none were worthy of her beauty and grace.

She waited hopefully for a valiant knight who was de-

serving of her to come from another land to win her, but no such knight appeared.

The princess had heard stories of a magic wishing well deep in the magic forest. This pool, it was said, granted the wish of any person who asked for something he wanted with all his heart.

"I certainly want a suitable husband with all my heart," the princess said to herself. With that, she resolved to go to the magic forest in search of the wishing pool. That night, she stole away from the castle of her father the king and took the path to the magic forest.

"I shall only go a short way into the forest and then turn back," she thought. "I can always try again another night."

The moon was full and gave much light between the tall trees, but the path disappeared and she was soon lost. The frightened princess wandered for a long while to the eerie groans and cries which could be heard even by an observer outside the magic forest.

When she thought she could surely not walk any further without rest, a clearing appeared before her eyes, with a pool in the middle of it, bright with reflected moonlight. Her hope rose anew; she rushed to the edge of the pond and said in her best princess manner:

"Oh wishing pool, please send to me a handsome princely knight worthy of my great beauty to carry me out of this forest."

Then the princess realized that her gown was rumpled and her hair mussed from the hours of stumbling through the magic forest. She bent over the pool and straightened herself, using it as a mirror.

"Certainly the pool will grant me my wish," she thought. "How could it refuse anyone so beautiful?"

"O princess!"

A strange, hoarse voice came out of the night. The princess quickly turned around, but nobody was there.

"O princess!"

The voice came again. It sounded far-away. Was it the pool?

"O princess! I am at your feet!"

The princess looked down and was startled by a most unusual figure. It was a toad—rather small, as toads go. Its

singular characteristic was the elegant little crown it wore on its head.

"Do you speak to me, toad?" asked the princess.

"O beauteous maiden, have compassion for me! I am a handsome prince bewitched by an evil spell which can only be broken by the kiss of a princess. My father is king of a distant and exotic land. Kiss me, and you will help me rule it!"

"Kiss a toad? You're so warty! I can't!"

"O mirage from Heaven! But I am such a handsome prince; and you certainly deserve no less than the most fair. One kiss from you and I am he."

"O toad, what you say may be true, but these pristine lips of mine have surely not been saved for slimy green ones such as yours."

"Be compassionate, beautiful forest queen! I know I will die if I lose you because of my temporary unattractive form. Kiss me and behold the prince you deserve."

"I fear I must make this sacrifice to get my wish. Very well, toad, I'll kiss you."

Having spoke this, the princess knelt and allowed the toad to scramble onto her hand. The toad removed his crown with one webbed hand and pulled in his bulbous eyes; the princess kissed him gingerly and hastily set him down, as she was not strong enough to hold a full-sized prince. Then she bent over the pool to wash the toad taste from her lips. She began to feel strange.

"Thanks, sucker," sneered the toad. He hadn't changed a bit.

"What do you mean. . . ." the princess began, but she stopped, as her voice was weak and hoarse.

A sudden horror seized her and again she looked in the pool. She was greeted by the reflection of a female toad with a small, exquisite crown on her head.

"Come on, baby, let's go to my pad," leered the prince-toad, warty as ever. Numbly, the transformed princess followed him.

Moral: Never trust a toad with a crown on its head.

the end